

I asked each to complete a card giving their name, the area they represented and if they could tell Congress one thing what that one thing would be. Here to my right are some of the comments which highlight what we in Congress need to do to make the lives of our children better, in the words of these various chaperons.

Later on my colleague, the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. CAPPS), the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ETHERIDGE), the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CLYBURN), and I, will be talking about the statements that these chaperons have made.

Charlie Jackson, an assistant principal at Brooks County High School in Quitman, Georgia says, "More money is needed to provide the opportunities and experiences to help our kids overcome the issues they face."

Luis Beltre of New York City writes, "Although young people cannot vote, we must empower them and instill in them a sense of pride because they do count. We should create a National General Youth Council that will express the voice of young people today."

Mike Staupoulus of Memphis, Tennessee, writes, "Democrats and Republicans must do a better job of making kids their priority and not their own political agendas. It is very discouraging to see the waste of time and energy being wasted in Washington as one party tries to show up the other. If you want the people to have a voice, then listen to them and make them a priority."

Robert Bratcher of Illinois writes, "I do not want to appear ungrateful but please do not give me money for extra teachers until you send me money to build another room in which they can teach. Make me accountable for educating my students but give me the tools. Help me and my colleagues make opportunities for our kids."

Anne Christensen of Minnesota writes, "Our children know what is happening. Please listen to them. Put more money into programs and early prevention."

Albert Harper of Coventry, Connecticut, writes, "So long as any child is disenfranchised from the promise of a future in America, we have talked without hope and our children fall in disrepair and violence."

Deborah A. Covarrubia of San Antonio, Texas, writes, "The most influential aspect of a young person's life is the education they receive. Parents, teachers and mentors should take more responsibility in teaching ethics. Ethics in education should be emphasized. God's law is man's law."

Kathleen Kropf of Macomb, Michigan writes, "Homeless children from working poor families continues to grow at an alarming rate in our country. These children and their families need to be acknowledged and assisted. Why in the richest country in the world do 10 per-

cent of our citizens go to bed hungry every night? There should be no, quote, hungry or homeless children in our country today. We cannot assist them without acknowledging and addressing this problem."

Finally, Roger Barnes of La Crosse, Wisconsin, writes, "The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing. For me, the main thing is our youth. Character does count. When it comes to character, we must put politics aside and do the right thing. Send a strong message about the moral fiber which made this country great. When we tolerate immorality at the highest levels, the message is overwhelming and becomes a disease which permeates the entire population."

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to speak to the issues of the chaperons.

THE LEGION OF HONOR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, as the year 2000 quickly approaches, I believe that we are in a unique position to reflect upon our Nation's history and the constant commitment of our United States veterans. These are the men and women who have accepted the highest responsibility and made the greatest sacrifice to preserve freedom and liberty for their brothers and sisters. Their dedication to protect our country and preserve the principles that it was founded upon have ensured and provided for the survival and strength of this Nation.

Last year, we celebrated the 80th Anniversary of Armistice Day, a day that marked the end of World War I. The first world war became known as the "Great War." It was fought to make the world safe for democracy. The government of France decided to mark the anniversary of the signing of the Armistice by awarding the Legion of Honor, France's highest decoration, to Americans and other allied veterans who served in the "Great War" on French soil.

Mr. Speaker, whenever we have been involved in conflict, brave citizens have always answered the call to duty. The first world war was no exception. The United States sent over 4.5 million troops into battle and over 100,000 never came home. These individuals gave their lives to protect our country and the freedoms we all enjoy today.

Today we have approximately 3,200 living World War I veterans, half of whom are believed to have served in France during the war. Harvey Lewis Gray of Carteret County, North Carolina, had just turned 18 in 1917 when he joined his fellow Americans in the "Great War" in the fight against tyranny.

Corporal Gray was one of almost 2 million Americans sent across the ocean to fight alongside French soldiers. He served in the United States Army from April of 1917 to April of 1919 and served in the 26th Division in France. This year, Harvey Gray is celebrating 100 years of life. I am proud that the Third District of North Carolina, which I have the honor to represent, is home to such a courageous soldier.

On October 7 of this year, Harvey Gray received the Legion of Honor award surrounded by his family and friends. His commitment to his Nation can only be matched with his commitment to his family. I could not be more proud to represent such a fine soldier and a fine man. Harvey Gray's effort in the name of freedom is unforgettable and worthy of the recognition and tribute he has received, and more.

Mr. Speaker, my grandfather was gassed during World War I at the Battle of Argonne. While my grandfather was fortunate enough to survive, thousands of others lost loved ones. The courage of these brave soldiers and the courage of all who have served this Nation have provided for the free democratic nation we enjoy today.

Daniel Webster once said, and I quote, "And by the blessing of God, may that country itself become a vast and splendid monument, not of oppression and terror, but of wisdom or peace, and of liberty, upon which the world may gaze with admiration forever."

Mr. Speaker, it is because of the strength and courage of men and women like Harvey Gray that America is free today. Our United States veterans symbolize the greatness of this Nation. They represent the America that rose to greatness on the shoulders of ordinary citizens. While we can never thank them enough for their sacrifice, we can recognize the heroic courage of our veterans who fought for our freedom.

Harvey Gray, I thank you and your country thanks you for your courage and your service to this great Nation.

CHAPERONES AND VOICES AGAINST VIOLENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. CAPPS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. JONES) for organizing this special order. Earlier today, I had the honor of addressing 180 very special people, the chaperons who have accompanied students from around this country in today's historic Voices Against Violence Conference. Clearly these professionals care about kids. Many of them work in schools or community centers, dealing with our young people

and with youth-related issues every day.

This week, they are serving as effective listeners, allowing students to express their views about the violence which has permeated their lives and surrounds them. I am proud that Raquel Lopez from Santa Barbara is escorting three students from the 22nd district of California. Raquel has spent her career working with youth in her community as a counselor to teen mothers, as an advocate for a local youth center and as a leadership development director for Girls, Incorporated.

Raquel does great work in our community, on the line every day, and is a wonderful presence at this conference.

Today's meeting away from the students for a few hours, chaperons were able to state their own views on why there is so much violence surrounding our students. I wanted to share some of their insightful comments on reducing youthful violence.

Maria Brenes from Oakland, California, says, "I strongly recommend that a national youth leadership initiative be implemented to provide positive alternatives as a larger violence prevention; to empower our youth."

Marcia Kaplan from New Jersey says, "We need some form of parenting education in the school system so that we can provide parents with tools that they need to deal with our kids," with their children, "today, and the issues that they face."

Lucy Santini Smith from Michigan has stated, "We must listen and determine together what programs should be funded, like after school programs and mentoring programs, demonstrate to them that Congress does listen, cares deeply and initiates real programs."

Finally, Benton Billings, a teacher from Lansing, Michigan, said, "If we really want to get at the heart of our Nation's school violence problems, the kids must be involved in the dialogue. They really know what is going on and what solutions would work best."

Mr. Billings, I could not agree with you more. In our efforts to understand and curtail violence among our youth, we sometimes forget to consult our kids. That is a mistake. It is time for us to learn from them. And just by being here, these committed individuals are allowing this to happen. I salute all of the adults who make this Voices Against Violence Conference possible. They really created the event so that the students could attend by coming along with them. As important as our work here in Washington is, we know that the real work in reducing youth violence will come from within our communities themselves.

Our chaperones are going to help make that happen. We have a responsibility here in Congress. We need to set our own priorities straight, with our

children and with our young people in mind, as a number one priority, so that the appropriate resources will be available for them in our communities and through the dedicated community heroes who work with them each and every day.

VOICES AGAINST VIOLENCE ADDRESS ISSUES INVOLVING YOUTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ETHERIDGE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, like my colleague who preceded me to the podium here this evening, I had the opportunity this morning to speak to 180 of the chaperons who were here with the over 400 students who are here today and tomorrow meeting on and talking about and using their voice, Voices Against Violence, so that those of us who serve in these halls might hear them.

Today and tomorrow, these youngsters from all across this country are participating in this conference and they are going to address the issues involved in youth violence.

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As most of my colleagues know, before I came to this body, I was privileged to serve for 8 years as State superintendent in North Carolina. I certainly have some understanding of what a difference these young people and their adult chaperones can make.

Parents involved and adults involved with children make all the difference in the world because they really are on the frontline of the common-sense solutions that we are searching here and across the country.

Our children's safety ought not to be about partisan politics. It ought not to even be about differences. It really ought to be what we can do jointly together in Congress at the State and local level, in the private sector, and in our communities to make our schools the safest place that our children attend.

We need to support early intervention and prevention. There is no question about that. We need to put resources there. We have to recognize and acknowledge and work toward parents as the first teachers. There is no question about that. But a lot of parents do not know how to be good teachers, and we need to help them. We need to do better jobs of that.

Certainly, we need to fund Head Start and Smart Start, make sure that children have the kind of care and services that they need to grow up to be productive and good citizens. It will save a lot of money later on and make a big difference when these young people get to be teenagers and adults.

We heard today about character education. It is the moral lens, in my opin-

ion, that we look at right and wrong. In North Carolina, we call it North Carolina values, because we instituted character education a number of years ago. I will talk about that a little more in a minute.

Certainly where we need them, we need resource officers in our schools for the protection to make sure they are safe; and that means we ought to have zero tolerance for violence, and it must be enforced.

But I want to commend the young people in my district who are participating in these conferences these 2 days. Anna Tomaskovic-Devey of Garner is a student at Enloe High School in Raleigh, North Carolina. She is doing an excellent job. I had a chance to talk with her. She is participating in the conference. Sunay Shah, a Southeast Raleigh High School junior is making a contribution, and he will take this back to his community, as will George Moore, Jr. of Coats, a Triton High School senior in Dunn.

I want to thank, this evening, the chaperone, Pam Callahan. She also serves as SDA advisor to the school and has been in involved in the school life for many years.

Finally, let me just read a couple of the recommendations that these chaperones have made from across the country. Florence Wethe from Walnut Creek, California, she said, "We need to teach core values. It must be taught to our young people in schools. They need to know the difference between right and wrong. Many times, they do not have that, and right and wrong, such as respect, responsibility, decision making, diversity, sharing, and appreciating the differences that we share." I think she is absolutely right.

Here is another one from Annabelle Blackstone from St. Louis, Missouri. She says, "Invest your money in our children. Their schools, their teachers, their communities. They are angry. They are miserable because they believe adults do not really care anymore."

What Annabelle is saying is, where we put our resources is what we value. If we really value our children, we need to put our resources there.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I will read one last card Kim Minor of Pennsylvania. "Class sizes matter in all grades. Teenagers need to know and be heard by teachers as much as first graders." Kim, you are absolutely right.

NO TAX INCREASES OR RAIDS ON SOCIAL SECURITY, JUST FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to start off reading a letter that I